Guerrillas killed three

JUN 7 1969

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Canadian held in Haiti bombing

A Canadian who spent 11 days in a Miami jail for guerrilla activities now is in the custody of the Bahamas police following a bombing raid this week over Port-au-Prince, capital of the Caribbean Republic of Haiti.

William Dempsey, 26, of London Ont., was first arrested in Florida in March after the fatal shooting of Haitian exile Gerard D. Baker while on guerrilla training manoeuvres 50 miles into the Florida Everglades swamp.

After his release he returned to Canada under threat of deportation, but stayed only a short time before returning to his guerrilla activity, which led him into the arms of the Grand Bahamas plice.

DEMPSEY WAS one of a crew of 10 which landed a bullet-riddled, four-engined Lockheed Constellation bomber, with only a red stripe marking on its tail, on a U.S. missile-tracking station on Grand Bahama Island Wednesday afternoon.

Today he is in custody of the Grand Bahamas police while the Canadian High Commission in Kingston Jamaica investigates his actions.

Grand Bahamas police chief Thomas Clunie said 10 persons had been charged with illegal entry, although last night the eight Americans in the plane crew, were flown out to Mami.

The 10th crew member, a Haiti exile remains in custody with Dempsey.

THE BOMBING raid on Port-au-Prince happened Wednesday night when an unidentified aircraft flew over the city and unloaded six 55-gallon oil drums containing high octane fuel with burning fuses.

One of these crude bombs landed in the grounds of the presidential palace of president Francois Papa Doc Duvalier, killing two adults, a six-month old child and injuring 20 persons.

It is not yet known where the other bombs landed.

Immediately after the attack, Haitian officials claimed the bomber had been flown from Cuba. Havana's reply was "such a plane is nothing more than the senile mentality of Duvalier."

WILLIAM DEMPSEY

DUVALIER made a 12-minute broadcast Thursday night and said the flight originated from South Caicos Island, at the south-eastern tip of the Bahamas.

An exile force of about 20 persons is also believed to have set out to attempt a landing after the bombing. The expedition left Florida Key, between 800 and 900 miles from Haiti, in a small boat.

One of them is believed to be former Haitian army officer Rene J. Leon, the man behind the Haitian part of the exile training group in Florida, which was also run in conjunction with Cuban exiles.

In fact, when Dempsey came home to London, he told a Spectator reporter there were 10 Haitians in the group that was uncovered by police. Asked if that group was planning an invasion of Haiti, he replied: "draw your own conclusions."

IN JULY, 1967, he led four Americans and four Cubans in an attempt to seize a Cuban fishing boat and hold its crew hostage until Castro agreed to release four Cuban saboteurs from prison.

They took a motor boat, and with food, weapons and ammunition, slipped out of the Miami river. They almost reached the Cuban coastline when a generator blew and they were forced to paddle back to Miami.

Nothing more was heard of Dempsey until March 15 this year when one of the guerillas in his training group was accidentally shot dead during a staged ambush, in the everglades, about two miles off State Road 94 in Monroe County, an hour's drive from Miami.

THE SHOOTING alerted police to the group's activities, their camp in the everglades was uncovered, Dempsey and other members in the group were jailed for 11 days while police carried out an investigation.

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(Spectator — continued)

He was a 22-year-old Haitian — Gerald Baker.

Baker was one of 12 men, under Dempsey's command, who were living in a camp about two miles into the everglades, off State Road 94 in Monroe County — about an hour's drive from downtown Miami.

To get into the camp, where trees had been felled to make a clearing, you walk a mile along a rough trail through the low tangle of shrubs and the towering red bay trees.

For neighbors, the guerillas had wild turkeys, raccoons, bobcats, frogs and snakes. Then there were the crocodiles and alligators in the stagnant pools of shallow water. Not a pleasant place.

The Dempsey Dozen, like the Viet Cong, had crude protection devices — sharpened bamboo sticks and nails protruding from boards — around their camp.

Dempsey later explained to police how Baker was killed:

The guerillas were divided into an attack squad, including Baker, and an ambush party.

They were using live ammunition and when the groups made contact the orders were given by hand signals, said Dempsey.

The ambush party fired a volley of shots and the attackers crouched down, rifles at the ready.

Then somebody fired a second volley and Baker sprawled to the ground.

"We knew he was hurt bad so a couple of the guys carried him out to the road and hitched a ride in a car to Miami," said Dempsey.

Baker was dead when they wheeled him into Miami Baptist Hospital.

An autopsy attributed death to a single shot in the heart.

"We didn't try to hush it up or anything," explained Dempsey. He walked along the road until he found a phone where he called the police.

Six Monroe County deputies, led by Lieut. Terry Jones, met Dempsey on the road and he led them to the camp.

The man suspected of firing the fatal shot was 21-year-old Charles Smith, who surrendered to the police on orders from Dempsey.

Smith, who is also from Haiti, had joined the guerillas after deserting from the U.S. Marine Corps at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Lieut. Jones says Smith was cleared at a coroners inquest and later turned over to Marine Corps authorities.

Dempsey and the others were held 11 days in jail until police completed their investigations.

They were released when the police decided not to press charges.

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But by this time Dempsey had other troubles.

Dempsey's lawyer, Lawrence Katz, of the Miami firm of Hoffman and St. Jean, intervened on his behalf with U.S. immigration officials.

They wanted to deport Dempsey. Katz made a deal. It was agreed that if Dempsey paid his own plane fare out of the U.S. there would be no deportation.

"I guess you could say I left because I'm an embarrassment to the U.S. government," said Dempsey.

He refused to confirm that his group was planning an invasion of Haiti but hinted: "There were 10 Haitians. Draw your own conclusions."

When Dempsey and his bunch were arrested, police collected 16 rifles, 16 .45 calibre pistols, jungle knives, ammunition and walkie-talkie equipment.

Where does the money come from to buy these weapons? To feed and clothe the guerillas?

"You shouldn't ask questions like that. There's just no way I'll answer it," said Dempsey.

"I've heard of whole families on Cuba being dragged from their homes and executed on the street because of the anti-Castro activities of some relative living in Florida."

Dempsey, wearing a new pair of blue jeans and a sweat shirt, looks bronzed and healthy.

"Sure, I'm in good shape. I like to keep fit. I even carried on with the exercising while I was in jail," he said.

When he flew into Malton, a couple of weeks ago, Dempsey had about $10 left.

"I guess I'll have to start looking for a job now. I'm pretty good at painting so maybe I'll get something in that line."

And why did he do it?

"I'll tell you one thing," he said. "It wasn't for the money. If it was I'd be in Biafra."

SPECTATOR (CTON)

THE SPECTATOR (HAMILTON, ONT.) NO DATE

Bill Dempsey to join a rag-tag band of would-be-warriors in the swampy everglades of Florida? Bill Dempsey knows, but he isn't talking. Not about that, or anything.

He puts it bluntly: "What I do for a living is none of your damn business."

"You're wasting your time here. I'm not going to tell you anything.

"It wouldn't be healthy for a lot of people if I shot off my mouth. Anyway, you probably know the story. Or you wouldn't be here."

"Here" was the home of his parents: a quiet detached bungalow in a typical London, Ontario, suburban street — Biscay Road.

We were in the living room. Dempsey added another cigarette to the pile of butts in the ashtray and reached for a fresh one.

Then he started talking about the weather, and airports, and the four walls. Anything but about the man who got shot; the miniature arsenal the police found; the plot to free four saboteurs held prisoner by Castro.

Anything but what Bill Dempsey has been doing for the past eight years.

It was at least half an hour before Dempsey even admitted some of the well-publicized (In Florida) facts about his eight years in everglades. But eventually facts began to slip out.

It is noted that anti-Castro and anti-communist guerrillas active in Florida aren't reknown for their public speaking.

Bill Dempsey is 27. He's five-foot-eleven out of his combat boots. He weighs in at around 180 pounds.

In the summer of 1961 he was 19, fresh out of Stratford Collegiate Institute and making a few dollars each week as a house painter.

But it bored him. He is the son of a former army captain and perhaps it was an inborn appetite for adventure which made him unhappy in his job.

Dempsey had learned the discipline and acquired a knowledge of the military life during a stint with the militia in Stratford and in London.

And either during his final year at college, or soon after, he tried to join the regular army.

He was refused on medical grounds. He has a slightly withered left arm — since birth — nothing particularly noticeable, but enough to fail an army medical.

In June or July, while Bill Dempsey was pondering his future and getting more bored with houses and paint, four of his former school buddies said he should quit work for a few weeks and join them in a trip down to Miami. Not for long. They were only going to stay a couple of weeks.

As Bill Dempsey stubbed another cigarette he opened the door to a few questions. "I guess it won't hurt to tell you I just went along for the ride."

It was a chance meeting in a bar, he says, that kept him in Miami when the other four went home.